

Application No.: 10/764,847
Amendment dated: July 13, 2005
Reply to Office action of 04/13/2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 5, 6 and 7, which have been found allowable, have been rewritten in independent form to the extent necessary. The wording of the original claim 6 was identical to that of original claim 5, except that claim 6 was dependent on claim 2 instead of on claim 1. Accordingly, claim 6 has been made dependent on claim 5, and has been amended so that its language corresponds to that of original claim 2.

Claim 9 has been retained, but made dependent on claim 5. New claims 16 and 17, which are similar to claim 9, but dependent on claims 6 and 7, have been added have been added. Claim 9 was rejected on Hauer. As noted by the Examiner, in Hauer, the felt layer 2 is provided between the knit layer and the ground textile layer. However, in Hauer, the knit layer is provided on the paper contacting surface side of the ground textile layer 1. In contrast, in claim 9 and claim 16, the three-dimensional knitted fabric is provided on the machine contacting surface side relative to the base body. In claim 17, the three dimensional knitted fabric is provided between two base bodies. Claims, 9, 16 and 17 should be allowed for the same reasons that support the allowance of claims 5, 6 and 7.

Claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form and amended by the addition of a requirement that "the density of said three-dimensional knitted fabric. . . [be] in the range from 0.1 g/cm³ to 0.4 g/cm³ with the fibers of said fibrous assembly having entered said three-dimensional knitted fabric as a result of needle punching." As pointed out in paragraph

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0063 of the Applicant's specification, for optimum sustained compression recovery, the density of the three-dimensional fabric is preferably in the range from 0.1 g/cm^3 to 0.4 g/cm^3 , even when the fibers of the fibrous assembly have already entered the knitted assembly. The density range for a three-dimensional knitted fabric does not appear to be taught in Penven FR2 727 442 (the closest prior art), or elsewhere in the art of record.

New independent claim 18 is directed to the embodiments of FIGs. 4(a), 4(b), 4(c) and 4(d), in which at least two three-dimensional knitted fabrics are incorporated within the press felt, and the base body is provided between two of said three-dimensional knitted fabrics. This structure is neither shown nor suggested in the art of record.

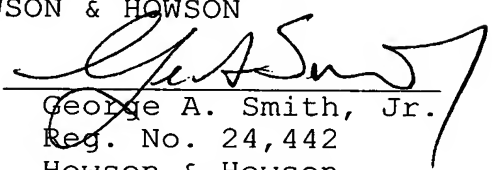
New dependent claims 19-23, which are dependent respectively on claims 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11, add the limitation that the "three-dimensional knitted fabric has openings surrounded by fibers, the opening ratio of the surface of said three-dimensional knitted fabric is 50% or less, and the size of the openings surrounded by fibers is 0.03 cm^2 or less." New dependent claim 24, which is dependent on claim 18, adds a similar limitation, referring to both of the three dimensional knitted fabrics between which the base body is provided. These limitations are supported by paragraph 0057 of the Applicants' specification, and do not appear to have been taught in the art of record.

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Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 5-7, 9, 11, and 16-24 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure:

Fee calculation

Check for fee covering excess claims